



**NORTHCENTRAL UNIVERSITY
ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEET**

Student: **Michael Higley-Vance**

THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETELY FILLED IN

Follow these procedures: If requested by your instructor, please include an assignment cover sheet. This will become the first page of your assignment. In addition, your assignment header should include your last name, first initial, course code, dash, and assignment number. This should be left justified, with the page number right justified. For example:

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Save a copy of your assignments: You may need to re-submit an assignment at your instructor's request. Make sure you save your files in accessible location.

Academic integrity: All work submitted in each course must be your own original work. This includes all assignments, exams, term papers, and other projects required by your instructor. Knowingly submitting another person's work as your own, without properly citing the source of the work, is considered plagiarism. This will result in an unsatisfactory grade for the work submitted or for the entire course. It may also result in academic dismissal from the University.

EDU7707-8

Dr. Leslie Oja

**Planning Dissertation Research in
Education**

**Activity #1: Thinking About Your Topic
Area**

Comments: Thank you for your email allowing me to exceed the 1-2 page expectation however, after reconsidering my inquiry I am submitting an assignment, which I hope meets the stated assignment expectations.

Activity 2 – Due by Sunday, November 09, 2014

You may submit one document, just indicate part 1 and part 2 on the submission.

Part 1

A page is 350 words to accommodate spacing, word length, and punctuation.

As a practice you will give articles careful review and understand all of the decisions, assumptions, and arguments the researchers made. You will put together your own complete set of questions to use in interrogating research articles.

For this assignment, review the resources mentioned for this week and put together a list of questions and strategies you will use to critically read research articles for your dissertation. Length: 1-2 pages not including title and reference pages.

Part 2

Apply the list of questions and strategies you developed in the previous assignment to two articles describing research that **contributes to theory** in your topic area. Choose short articles (fewer than 10 pages) if possible. Submit your analysis of both articles in a single brief paper. Send your faculty member the articles or links to them. You may organize the paper simply as answers to your Part I questions. Follow APA style only for the reference list. Length: 3-5 pages not including title and reference pages.

It is helpful to use second level headings (APA Manual section 3.03) to distinguish between points made.

Faculty Use Only

<Faculty comments here>

Michael,

The research topic is interesting and should provide beneficial data to enable school administrators to improve the ELA program. It appears you are thinking about a correlational research study. The goal of correlational research is to find out whether one or more variables can predict other variables. Correlational research allows a researcher to find out what variables may be related. However, the fact that two things are related or correlated does not mean there is a causal relationship. It is important to make a distinction between **correlation and causation**. Two things can be correlated without there being a causal relationship. The distinction between correlation and causation is important to the study. Often, student use the word correlation when they are actually referring to causation.

I also did not read what methodology you will be using for the research study. Refer to text written by authors such as Creswell (2014) for guidance in selecting a methodology that aligns with the research design.

I am assuming you have begun the process of conducting a literature search on the research topic. Include in the literature search a theory to support the research topic and opposing views for a rich discussion of the topic.

Assignment 1 demonstrated completing **all** required parts of the assignment, demonstrates **good** understanding of materials, uses **very** clear and effective expression appropriate to scholarly writing, and has **some** errors in grammar, mechanics, APA form and style, and APA formatting.

It is essential that consistent use of standard American English conventions are practiced resulting in consistent use of APA form and style. Writing for research is concise and follows the APA form and style format. Often, students hire an Editor to correct APA errors; however, an Editor can be expensive. Refer to the APA Manual:

Chapters 3 and 4 for APA form and style

Chapter 6 for citing sources in-text in APA format

Chapter 7 for citing sources in APA format on a Reference list

I provided websites for checking grammar and two academic writing handbook titles; at least one of the writing handbooks should be used with all writing. I would also recommend accessing the NCU Academic Success Center and the NCU Writing Process; the five stages of writing are used throughout the program for all writing. The NCU Academic Success Center is an excellent source for writing assistance; staff at the center is knowledgeable regarding the process of writing for research.

A 99% Dr. Oja 11 02 2014

Learning Outcomes

- 1.0 Examine the Northcentral Dissertation process.
- 2.0 Identify possible research problems for a dissertation.
- 5.0 Evaluate published articles to identify issues in a topic area.

Apply APA formatting to materials produced.

When composing materials in a doctoral program, always write in an academic scholarly voice using APA form and style; the syllabus does not state all the requirements for writing in APA scholarly voice. However, all activities include “apply APA formatting to materials produced.” Always include a title for the activity and, when appropriate, second level headings to clarify the subject of the paragraph such as if the activity requires a description of three different writing strategies. The second level heading would be the name of one of the writing strategies. The more familiar with APA style of writing the more prepared you will be for the milestone papers and the Comprehensive Examination (APA Manual (6th ed.) page 62, section 3.03).

Reference List

Refer to the NCU Dissertation Template found at the NCU Dissertation Center.

Formatting: Single space each reference citation, along with a .5 inch hanging indent; double space between consecutive references in the reference list (See the Doctoral Candidacy Resource Guide located in the Dissertation Center for NCU exceptions to APA format).

NCU allows citations in the reference list to be single-spaced. This varies from the APA Manual, which calls for citations to be double-spaced (p.216). However, in keeping with the APA Manual, double space between each individual reference.

The format if single spacing is also for an annotated bibliography and citing sources.

To check standard American English conventions:

<http://www.grammarly.com/>

APA Manual (6th ed.) tutorial:

<http://www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorials/basics-tutorial.aspx>

Guide to Grammar and Writing

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

Rosen, L. J. (2012). *The academic writer's handbook* (3rd ed.). Boston, MA: Longman. ISBN: 9780205717613

❖ Strunk, W. (2000). *The elements of style* (4th ed.). Boston, MA: Longman. ISBN: 9780205309023

Northcentral University Grading Guidelines – Graduate Scoring

Numerical Points	Letter Grade	Descriptor	Explanation
100-94 93-90	A A-	Excellent	Completes all required parts of the assignment, demonstrates deep understanding of materials, uses very clear and effective expression appropriate to scholarly writing, and has very few or no errors in grammar, mechanics, APA form and style, and APA formatting.
89-87 86 - 83	B+ B	Good	Completes all or most required parts of the assignment, demonstrates good understanding of readings, uses mostly clear and effective expression appropriate to scholarly writing, and has few errors in grammar, mechanics, APA form and style, and APA formatting.
82-80 79-77	B- C+	Fair	Completes most required parts of the assignment, demonstrates some understanding of the readings, and writing is somewhat clear, effective, and scholarly, and has some errors in grammar, mechanics, APA form and style, and APA formatting.
76-73	C	Poor	Completes some required parts of the assignment, demonstrates some understanding of readings, and writing is difficult to understand and unscholarly and has several errors in grammar, mechanics, APA form and style, and APA formatting.
72-0	F	Unacceptable	Completes few required parts of the assignment, demonstrates little understanding of readings, and writing is difficult to understand and unscholarly and has many errors in grammar, mechanics, APA form and style, and APA formatting.

Using the Grading Guidelines for Success

A. The Northcentral University Grading Guidelines are designed to ensure that faculty and students have a shared understanding of assignment quality. Carefully reviewing the guidelines can help you plan and complete your assignments to the best of your ability.

B. The grading guidelines are based on four assignment criteria. Keep these in mind as you complete an assignment:

1. Assignment completion (highlighted in orange) – the extent to which you have followed assignment instructions.

2. Understanding of materials (highlighted in green) – the extent to which you have demonstrated understanding of readings or other materials.

3. Expression (highlighted in blue) – the extent to which your expression is clear, effective, and appropriate for scholarly writing.

4. Grammar, mechanics, APA (highlighted in purple) – the extent to which you have used correct grammar, word choice, punctuation, APA form and style, and APA formatting.

C. Your instructor will ignore criteria not relevant to an assignment (e.g., discussion posts and reflections need only follow APA formatting for citations and references).

D. Submission of an assignment that is outside of the page length (or slide number) parameters may result in a request for a re-submission that meets the parameters or a one step reduction of a grade (e.g., from A- to B+), at a faculty member's discretion.

<Faculty Name>	<Grade Earned>	<Writing Score>	<Date Graded>
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Proposed Dissertation Topic

Michael Higley

Northcentral University

Proposed Dissertation Topic

The purpose of my proposed correlational study is to investigate whether or not a blended (computer integrated) learning environment has a positive influence on student performance within the intervention English and Language (ELA) class. Additionally, the study will investigate the relationship between the ELA intervention class and the regular ELA class.

Currently^[1] I serve as the assistant principal for a middle school in Clarksville, TN. I have worked in this building for thirteen^[2] years and in this capacity for the last five years. I serve approximately 900 students and I am primarily responsible for students in 6th^[3] and 7th grade.

Furthermore, I am the instructional leader responsible for ensuring teachers in the regular ELA

and ELA intervention classes, 6th-8th grade, are providing quality instruction, assessments, and re-teaching opportunities, which are timely and effective.

Historically^[4] each year ~~our~~^[5] students show growth^[6] however, for the past few years ~~we~~^[7] have been unable to meet the state's student achievement expectations in ELA. To address this^[8] consistent short fall ~~we~~ have created a master schedule^[9], ~~which~~ pairing s two ELA intervention courses, Read180 and System 44^[10], with a regular ELA course providing students with 60 minutes of instruction in each course for a total of 120 minutes a day of ELA instruction. Each ELA intervention program has a blended learning (computer-integrated) component, which research has shown helps improve student reading and language skills. It is my hope that by identifying those students who require additional ELA support at the beginning of the school year and pairing them with the appropriate ELA intervention program, student mastery in the regular ELA course will improve^[11]. ~~Thus resulting in~~ improvement of ~~ing~~ student achievement and meeting state expectations for student proficiency in ELA achievement scores.

The research questions identified for this study are designed to determine if the independent variable, a blended approach to teaching and learning, has an influence on the dependent variables regarding student achievement and satisfaction within and between the ELA classes. The anticipated ELA intervention classes that will be used in the study are Read180 and System 44, given the students in these classes are also assigned to a regular ELA class. The study will be located at Kenwood Middle School and include students from 6th, 7th, and 8th grade who comprise these two intervention groups. Two separate data pieces will be collected throughout the study: anonymous online^[12] student surveys, which will measure student satisfaction of a blended learning approach, and achievement scores from both ELA classes, regular and intervention.

The research questions identified for this study are included to isolate the relationship between the independent variable – a blended approach to teaching and learning and the dependent variables regarding student satisfaction and achievement.

Q1. Does computer-assisted learning increase student satisfaction of an ELA intervention class?

Q2. Does computer-assisted learning increase student achievement in the regular ELA classroom?

Q3. Does computer-assisted learning in an ELA intervention class increase student achievement in the regular ELA classroom?

NCU Process Questions

- When should I request formal permission from my district to conduct research? Before I begin finalizing my concept paper or after?
- You may begin to gather data after the approval of the IRB,
- Do I select my dissertation chairs? If so, what is the process?
- NCU selects the Dissertation Chair based on your research topic and appoints a Subject Matter Expert as the Committee Member.